

VZCZCXRO1412
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHKV #1182/01 1691541
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 171541Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY KYIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5853
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KYIV 001182

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: RADA COUNTING DOWN TO SUMMER RECESS

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (C) Summary. The consensus in the Rada across the political spectrum on June 17 was that regardless of the legal status of the coalition, the reality is that the parliament will not accomplish anything significant in its remaining month in session and all are now looking to the fall for change. What that change will be, however, was up for debate, with some MPs predicting a new coalition and some predicting another round of pre-term Rada elections. All agreed that the situation was really about next year's presidential election, although none could say how this would all play out in the end. From the Rada floor, Speaker Yatsenyuk reiterated that he would not announce the termination of the coalition, but the parliament was unable to muster a majority even for procedural votes, and in the end, Yatsenyuk closed the session early and called faction leaders to meet for further talks. Regions MPs began collecting signatures to appeal to the Constitutional Court about the coalition's legal status, but no one we spoke with anticipated that the Court would rule the coalition defunct.

12. (C) Comment. With only two more voting weeks left in the spring session (the Rada formally adjourns July 18), MPs appeared reconciled that the parliament would accomplish nothing significant until the fall. What happens next is still up in the air. Regions and Lytvyn Bloc MPs with whom we spoke indicated that a new coalition might be in the offing, while BYuT MPs alluded to possible new elections. All agreed that the current infighting, political paralysis, and economic problems were damaging Prime Minister Tymoshenko's popular ratings, but none would count her out of the game. End summary and comment.

Coalition Remains on Paper, but Does not Function

13. (SBU) From the Rada rostrum, Yatsenyuk on June 17 reiterated his position that as far as he was concerned the coalition was intact unless a faction withdrew and said he would not do anything to move towards terminating the coalition. Several Regions MPs had said in the press ahead of the Rada session that they expected Yatsenyuk to announce the official collapse of the coalition. In light of the Speaker's refusal to do so, the faction began collecting the necessary 45 signatures of MPs to send a petition to the Constitutional Court regarding the status of the coalition. Despite Yatsenyuk's defense of the coalition, the Rada could not pass a single vote. First they tried to pass a bill amending traffic rules, but five members of the coalition did not vote for it and it failed. Then the Rada tried to add several bills to its agenda -- including amendments to the law on amnesty, a bill on housing for servicemen from National Security and Defense Committee Chairman Hrytsenko (OU-PSD), and amendments to some laws on the tax police -- but no vote obtained the necessary 226. When it became clear that the Rada could not hold a successful vote, Yatsenyuk closed the session and called for a meeting of faction leaders late in the afternoon.

14. (C) There was general agreement among the MPs with whom we spoke on June 17 that there were no expectations that the Rada would function between now and summer recess. Regions MP Makeyenko said that the Rada would not accomplish much in its remaining month. A glum-looking Hrytsenko said the coalition was nonexistent and nothing would be done until September. BYuT MP Shkil told us that the coalition was not functioning. However, neither they nor other MPs were certain about what would happen when the Rada returns in early September.

15. (C) Makeyenko confirmed that Regions was collecting signatures to appeal to the Constitutional Court about the status of the coalition, but that he did not expect the Court to issue a ruling. He blamed the whole situation on President Yushchenko and his Chief of Staff Baloha, who he said were trying every angle to get Yushchenko reelected next year, although he added that he thought their plans were not working out. He thought they would leave Tymoshenko in office for now and continue to hammer her in the press in order to lower her popularity ratings. Although he thought a broad coalition might happen, he was somewhat skeptical because he did not think Yushchenko wanted Regions leader Yanukovych to be Prime Minister again and doubted Yanukovych would accept any other position. However, he did believe that Regions oligarch Akhmetov was working with Baloha and Yushchenko in order to insure that Tymoshenko was not elected president next year -- although how that would play out,

KYIV 00001182 002 OF 002

Makeyenko could not say. He also said that he did not expect new pre-term Rada elections this year; they were expensive and unlikely to change anything. Makeyenko ended by saying that all would be clear in September.

16. (C) BYuT MP Volynets told us he believed that Yushchenko was trying to reach agreement with Regions and Lytvyn Bloc, with Yanukovych becoming PM and Lytvyn becoming Speaker, leaving Yatsenyuk out in the cold. For that reason, Yatsenyuk had turned to Tymoshenko, because he saw it as the only way to protect himself as Speaker. Volynets said that Yatsenyuk and Tymoshenko had held a meeting in the evening of June 16 -- he did not know what was agreed to, but he believed that meeting was the reason that Yatsenyuk had announced his refusal to call the coalition dead. Volynets said that he expected early elections in the fall. He indicated his faction was discussing them and he believed others were too. He also told us that Baloha had pressured the business interests of a BYuT MP, poultry entrepreneur Yevhen Sigal, resulting in the MP refusing to attend Rada sessions or let anyone else use his voting card to cast votes in his absence. Volynets's faction colleague Shkil told us that there was currently no coalition, and that Yushchenko wanted a broad coalition.

17. (C) Lytvyn Bloc MP Vashchuk said that nothing would happen until the fall. At that point, she thought the most likely scenario would be the reformatting of the coalition. While she could not be certain of the composition of the new coalition, she thought the best format would be OU-PSD, Lytvyn Bloc, and Regions. The worst, in her view, would be an alliance between BYuT and Regions because the uniting of their business interests would spell the end to democracy. She thought new elections were unlikely, arguing that BYuT MPs were less willing to stage another walkout now because of the expense of new elections and the uncertainty that they would get their seats back. The other possibility she cited was rumors now circulating that the constitution would be amended to take it back to its 2004 form, with no requirement for a coalition. Vashchuk said that the current demands for a coalition were too much. It might be better to allow the President to pick the PM -- getting the candidate confirmed

in the Rada would still require intrafactional cooperation, but without the current rigid requirements. If events followed such a path, she believed someone like Yatsenyuk might become PM.

18. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
TAYLOR